

5 Things Every Parent Should Know Before Choosing a Dance Studio

If most dance studios seem to have qualified, friendly teachers, experience teaching children and a big show at the end of the year, aren't they all pretty much the same? Does it really matter which place you decide to enroll at? Yes. There are 5 main things that can make a huge difference in the quality of instruction your child receives, the amount of extra work and hassles the parents must deal with and the overall enjoyment and satisfaction of being involved with a dance program. Here are 5 things that every parent should consider before deciding on a dance studio for their child.

1. What is the size of the class?

If the dance class has fewer students in it, each child will receive more individual, personalized attention and in turn will learn faster and have more fun. With younger students, it is easier for a teacher to maintain control over the class and make sure each student understands the concepts and instructions. Our smaller class sizes make sure that no fundamental concepts are being missed. A smaller class size also allows our teachers to ensure that students are not developing bad habits or improper technique.

Our studio limits all of our lower school classes (ages 3-7) to a maximum of just 10 students per class. All lower school classes have an assistant teacher in them, making the ratio of student to teacher 5 to 1. With our upper school classes (ages 8 and up) we limit our class size to just 14 students per class

2. Qualified Teaching Staff

Whether your child is a serious or recreational dancer, age 3 or age 16, proper technique is necessary to prevent injury. Even at the preschool level, it is important that the dancer learn the fundamental concepts and techniques of all forms of dance. Our teachers have all been properly trained through professional experience, college degree programs, or personal training at a professional or pre-professional school. We are privileged to have some of the best teaching staff in the East Texas area and the level of expertise our teaching staff can offer is simply amazing. We have both recreational programs as well as a pre-professional program. Our lower school program (ages 3-7) is excellent and the kids have a tremendously positive experience in which they improve coordination, group participation, and self-esteem. It is a fun filled class where the kids can learn proper dance technique while singing, bouncing balls, waving scarves, running on their "tippy toes", and being Beautiful Ballerina Princesses! With positive reinforcement, the kids are learning skills that will last a lifetime.

3. What type of dance floor is used?

Dance is a very physical activity that requires a lot of jumping, which can put stress on bones and joints. Most dance footwear does not provide any cushioning or support, so the shock of dance movement can place a lot of pressure on the knees and back of a dancer. The best way to prevent against potential injury is by choosing a studio with a professional “sprung Marley floor”. A sprung floor is a dance floor that rests on a system of wood and foam, to absorb the shock of jumping. It is similar to a gym floor, but specifically built for dancers.

The top layer of the dance floor is also an important factor. A vinyl composite “Marley” floor is accepted worldwide as the best surface layer for recreational to professional dance, for ballet and jazz. A Marley floor allows the dancer to slide, with a degree of “controlled slip, but is not slipper so there is less risk of slips and falls. Very few studios use professional Marley floors because of the expense involved, and usually opt for a similar, less expensive surface, or a wood or tile surface.

Our ballet and jazz rooms both have sprung Marley floors and our tap and hip-hop room has a sprung floor with a wood surface designed for dance studios. The special flooring is an advantage to both students and teachers. It absorbs the impact of dancing which keeps the dancers and teachers energized and also helps prevent injury.

4. What is the Recital like and do the dancers practice all year long for it?

Most dance schools have an end of year performance. The typical “dance recital” is one where the dancer enter the stage, perform their class dance, and exit the stage. Our end of year performance is a full blown, professional production. We have full sets, scenery, professional lighting, lead characters, and custom costumes. ALL DANCERS have a role in the production. ALL DANCERS get 2 FREE TICKETS and a FREE T-SHIRT. We know how hard our dancers work in preparation for the show and we understand what it takes for parents to get them to the rehearsals. We feel the tickets and the t-shirts are well deserved!

Our students DO NOT rehearse their recital dances all year in class. They learn proper technique the first semester and start working on recital dances about February. Because they are well prepared from the first half of the year, they learn their dances quickly and do not have to waste important class time working on recital.

5. Can I get immediate assistance and customer service?

In many studios, the teacher or the studio owner conducts classes and does the administration. By trying to do two jobs at once, the class may suffer as the teacher has to use class time for customer service issues, or the studio may have no customer service available if the teacher is in a class. To have a good experience it is important to choose a studio that can assist you with details like costumes or schedules, even if a teacher is occupied in a class. Our school has office staff on hand during all regular class times, so you can get immediate assistance.

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